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AMAR CHITRA KATHA

No. 355 Rs. 4/-

Arjuna's 12-Year Exile

Mahabharata

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Sringeri

Amar Chitra Katha
No.355 April 15, 1986

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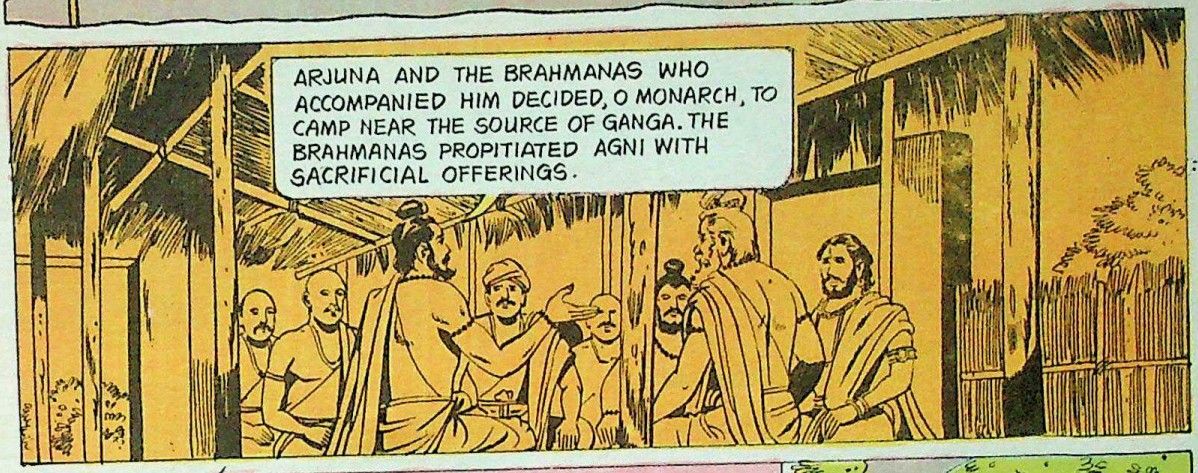
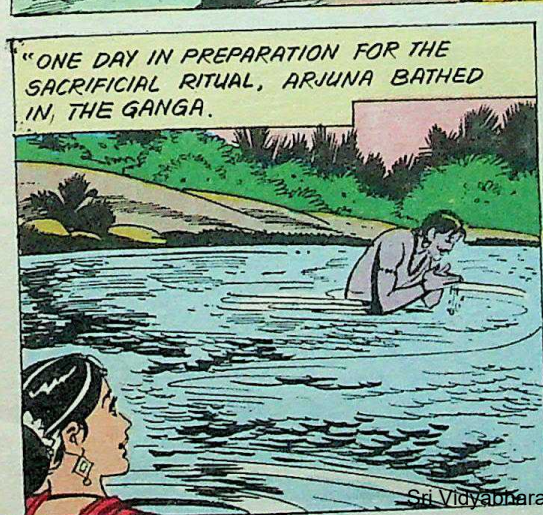
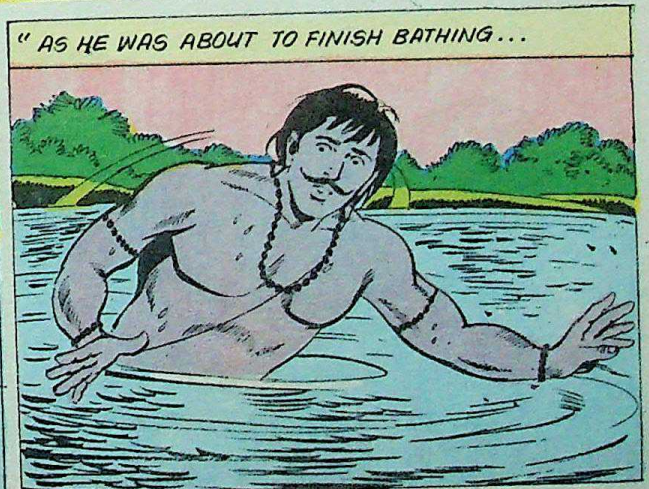
Mahabharata – 14

ARJUNA'S 12-YEAR EXILE







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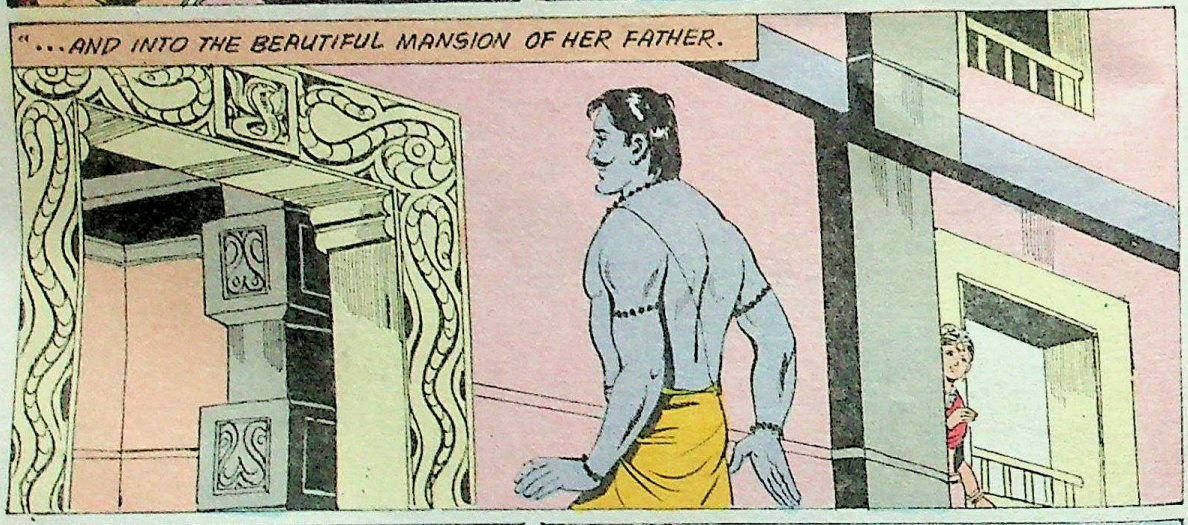

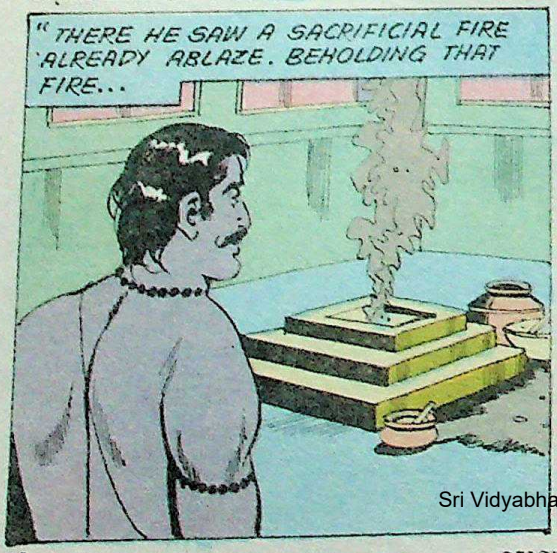

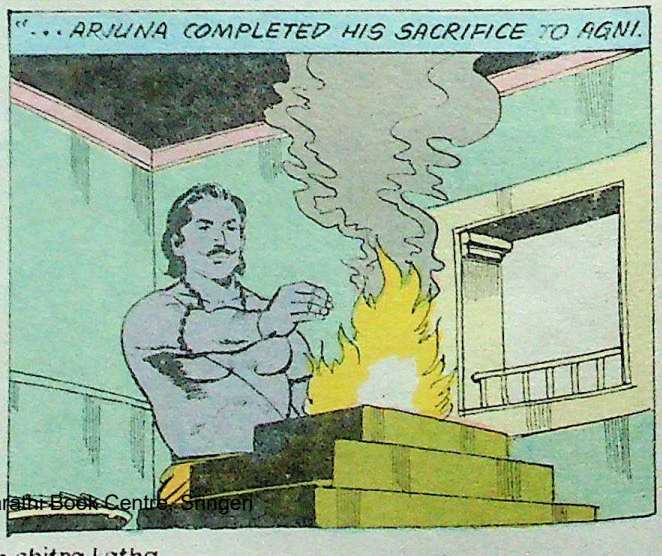

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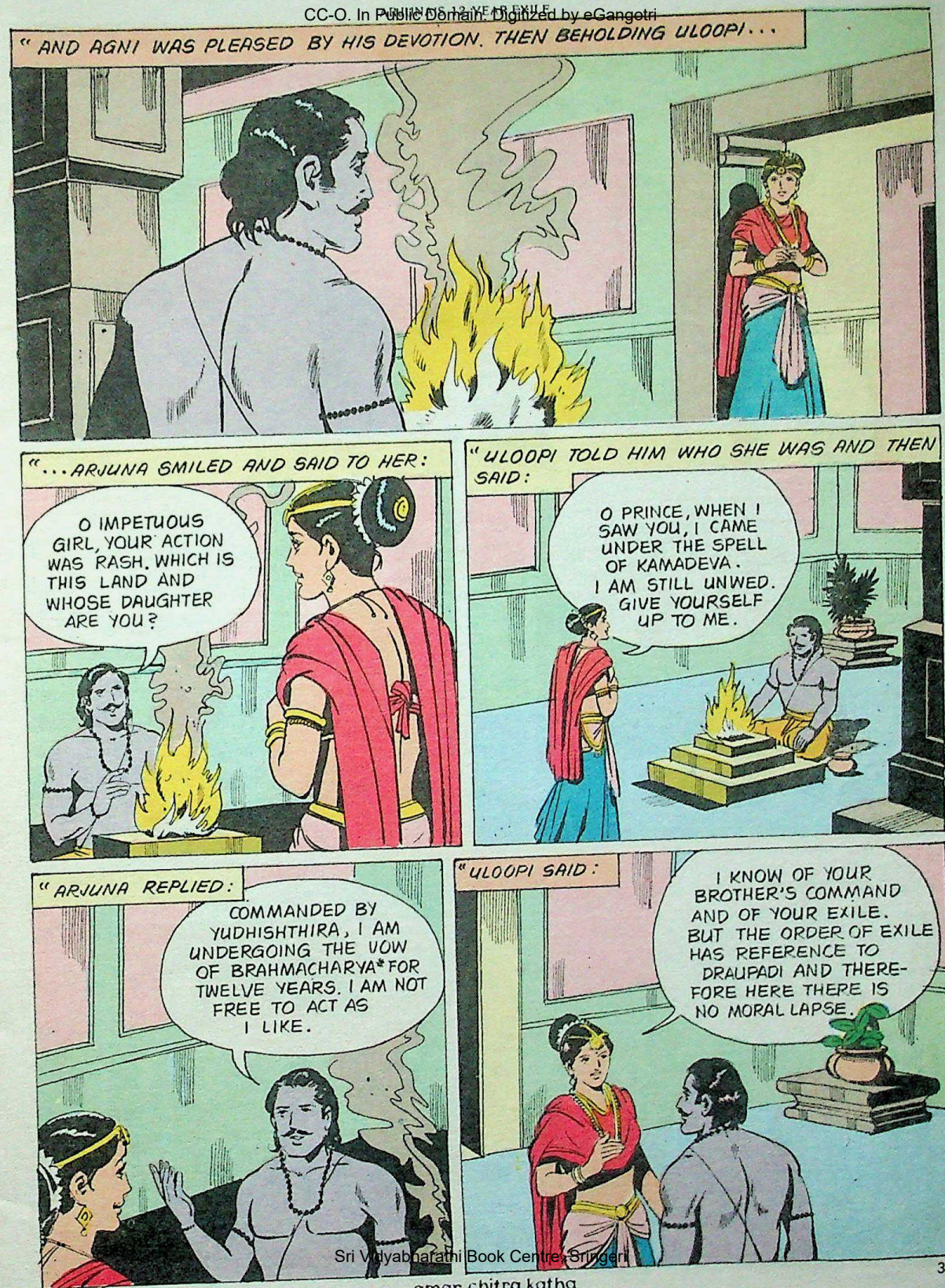

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I COME TO YOU. ACCEPT ME. THE WISE APPROVE OF THIS. IF YOU DO NOT, BE CERTAIN THAT I WILL BE DEAD.

THUS ADDRESSED BY ULOOPI, ARJUNA IN ALL PROPRIETY FULFILLED HER WISH AND STAYED IN THE MANSION THAT DAY AND NIGHT.

"THEN, LED BY HER, HE RETURNED TO THE BANKS OF THE GANGA...

"...AND ULOOPI CONFERRED A BOON ON HIM SAYING:

DENIZENS OF THE WATER WILL ALWAYS OBEY YOU. YOU WILL BE INVINCIBLE IN WATER.

"THEN, TAKING HER LEAVE OF HIM, ULOOPI RETURNED TO HER OWN ABODE.

"AND ARJUNA TURNING TO THE BRAHMANAS INFORMED THEM OF ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED.

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"THEN ACCOMPANIED BY THEM HE SET OUT FOR THE HIMALAYAS.

HE VISITED THE SITES CONSECRATED BY AGASTYA, BY VASISHTHA AND BY BHRIGU.

THEN DESCENDING FROM THOSE HEIGHTS, HE JOURNEYED TOWARDS THE EAST TO BEHOLD THE REGIONS THAT LAY IN THAT DIRECTION.

HE VISITED ALL THE SACRED SPOTS OF ANGA, VANGA AND KALINGA. THE BRAHMANAS ACCOMPANYING HIM, BADE HIM FAREWELL AND ARJUNA CAME TO THE MAHENDRA MOUNTAINS...

"...AND THEN WENT TO MANIPURA, WALKING LEISURELY ALONG THE SEASHORE.

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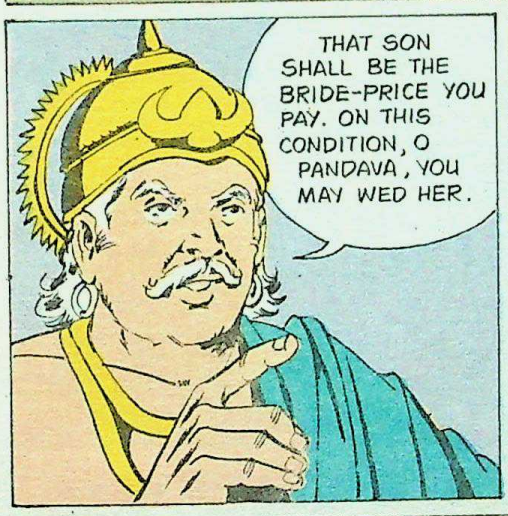

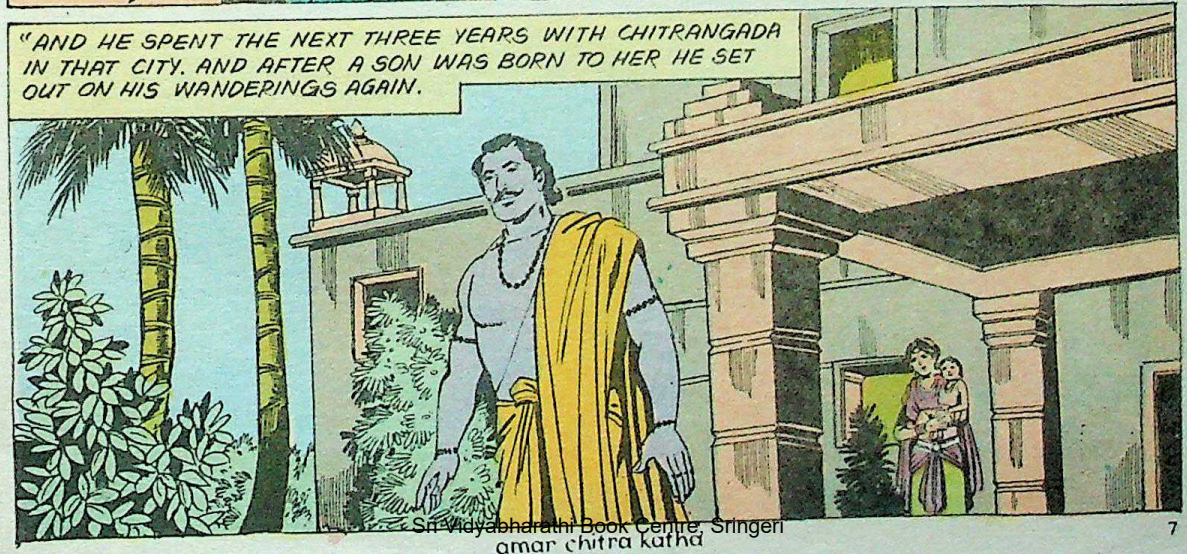

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"HE WENT TOWARDS THE SOUTHERN SEAS TO THE REGIONS ADORNED BY THE RISHIS LIVING THERE.

"FIVE SACRED SPOTS WERE HOWEVER SHUNNED BY ALL OF THEM. ARJUNA THEN ASKED ONE OF THE RISHIS:

WHY ARE THESE FIVE SACRED SPOTS SHUNNED BY THE ENLIGHTENED ONES?

THEY REPLIED:

EACH OF THESE WATER-SPOTS HAS A CROCODILE WHICH DRAGS DOWN THE RISHIS WHO ENTER IT. THEREFORE ARE THEY SHUNNED.

"THEN ARJUNA, THOUGH DISSUADED BY THEM, WENT UP TO THE WATER...

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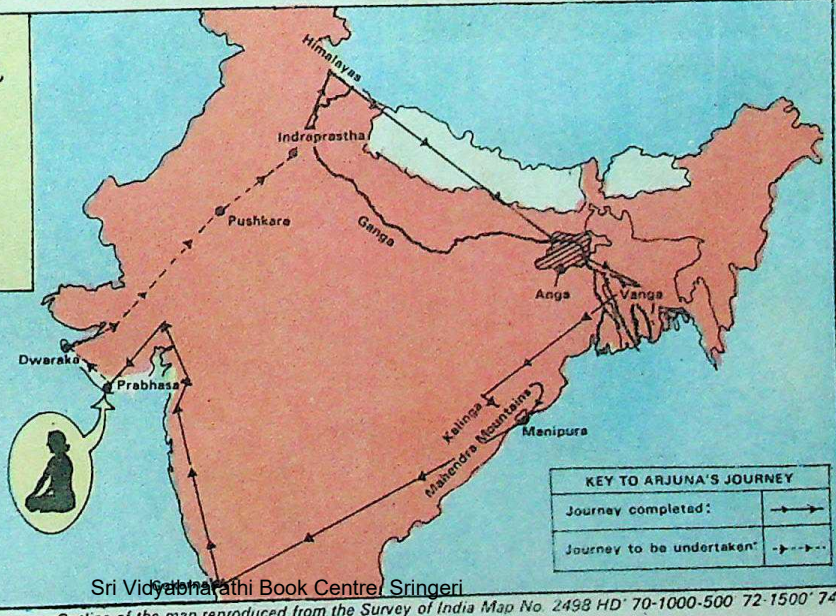
"... HE PROCEEDED TO MANIPURA. THERE HE BEHELD BABHRUVAHANA, THE SON HE HAD BEGOTTEN WITH CHITRANGADA AND...

...WHOM HE CEREMONIALLY PRESENTED TO THE KING SAYING:

ACCEPT THE SON, BEGOTTEN OF ME ON CHITRANGADA, AND FREE ME OF MY DEBT.

TAKING LEAVE OF CHITRANGADA, O MONARCH, ARJUNA PROCEEDED TOWARDS GOKARNA. THEN VISITING, ONE AFTER ANOTHER, THE SACRED SPOTS ON THE SHORES OF THE WESTERN OCEAN, HE REACHED PRABHASA.



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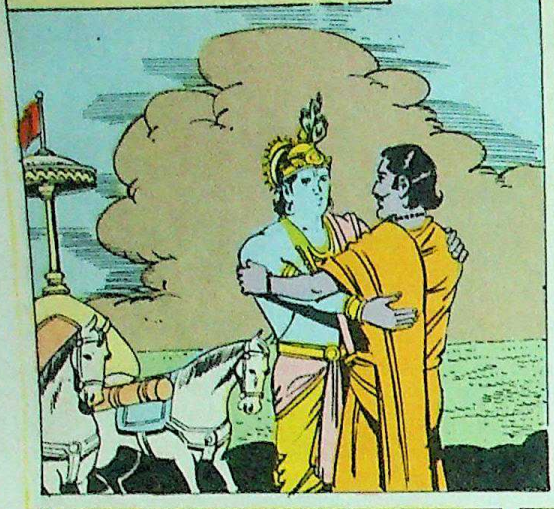
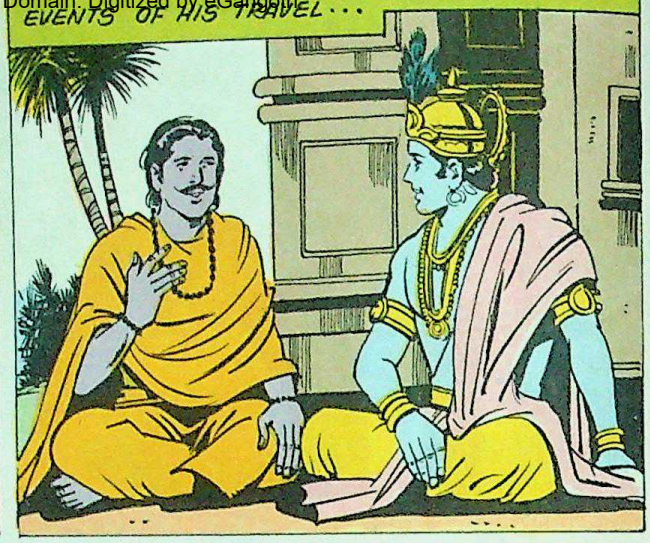
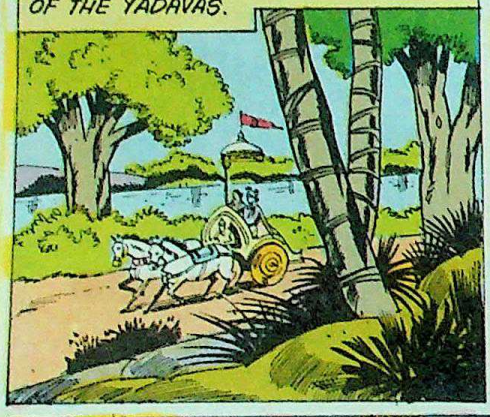
"KRISHNA HEARD OF HIS ARRIVAL AND WENT TO GREET HIS FRIEND.



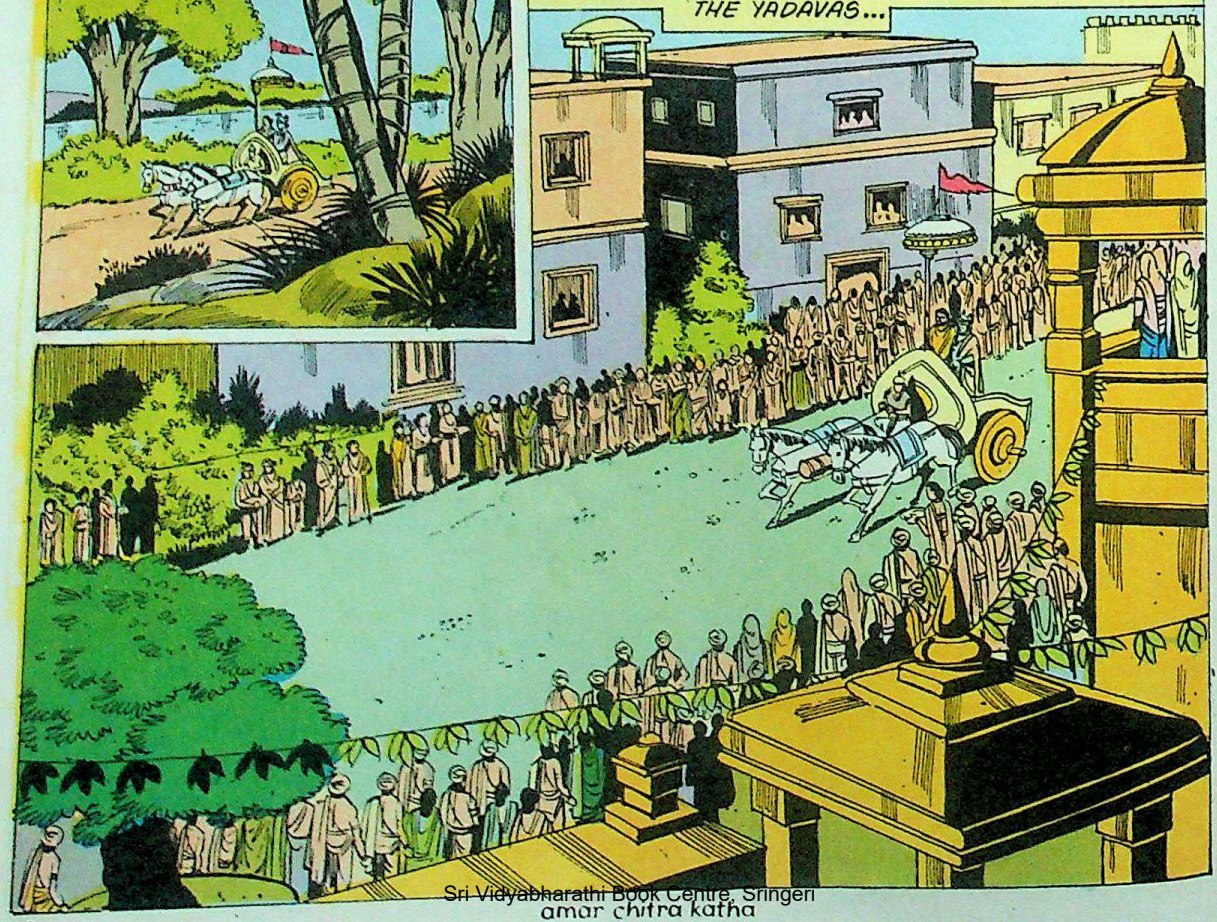
"AND AFTER ARJUNA NARRATED IN DETAIL THE EVENTS OF HIS TRAVEL...



"...THEY SET OUT IN A GOLDEN CHARIOT FOR DWARAKA, THE CAPITAL OF THE YADAVAS.



"AND, O JANAMEJAYA, THE CITY OF DWARAKA, WITH ITS HOUSES AND GARDENS, WAS GAILY DECORATED IN HONOUR OF ARJUNA'S VISIT. AND THE CITIZENS OF DWARAKA THRONGED THE ROYAL PATH TO SEE THE SON OF KUNTI. ARJUNA WHO WAS RECEIVED BY THE YADAVAS...



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"...ARRIVED AT THE PALACE OF KRISHNA WHICH WAS ENCRUSTED WITH GEMS.

AND HE STAYED THERE WITH KRISHNA FOR MANY DAYS. NOW WAS HELD THE FESTIVAL OF THE YADAVAS ON THE RAIVATAKA MOUNTAIN ADORNED WITH BEJEWELLED DWELLINGS AMONG ABUNDANT TREES.

MUSICIANS, SINGERS AND DANCERS PERFORMED THERE. THE CITIZENS SOME ON FOOT, SOME IN CARRIAGES, WITH THEIR WIVES AND THEIR ATTENDANTS WERE THERE IN THEIR THOUSANDS.

"AND WHILE KRISHNA AND ARJUNA STROLLED TOGETHER AMONG THE WONDROUS SIGHTS THERE...

"...THEY SAW SUBHADRA, THE DAUGHTER OF VASUDEVA, AMIDST HER FRIENDS. AND ARJUNA WAS SMITTEN BY KAMADEVA.

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"KRISHNA OBSERVED ARJUNA AND SAID WITH A SMILE:

A RECLUSE OF THE FOREST AGITATED BY KAMADEVA!

THAT IS MY SISTER AND SHE IS THE FAVOURITE OF OUR FATHER.

"ARJUNA SAID:

SHE IS IRRESISTIBLY BEAUTIFUL! IF THIS SISTER OF YOURS BECOMES MY WIFE, ALL PROSPERITY WILL BE MINE.

"KRISHNA SAID:

IF THAT IS WHERE YOUR THOUGHT IS, THEN I SHALL SPEAK TO MY FATHER, MYSELF.

"THEN ARJUNA SAID:

TELL ME, O KRISHNA, THE MEANS BY WHICH I MAY WIN HER. I SHALL DO EVERYTHING HUMANLY POSSIBLE.

"KRISHNA REPLIED:

SWAYAMVARA IS THE MARRIAGE ORDAINED FOR KSHATRIYAS. BUT... THERE IS UNCERTAINTY IN IT. HOWEVER...

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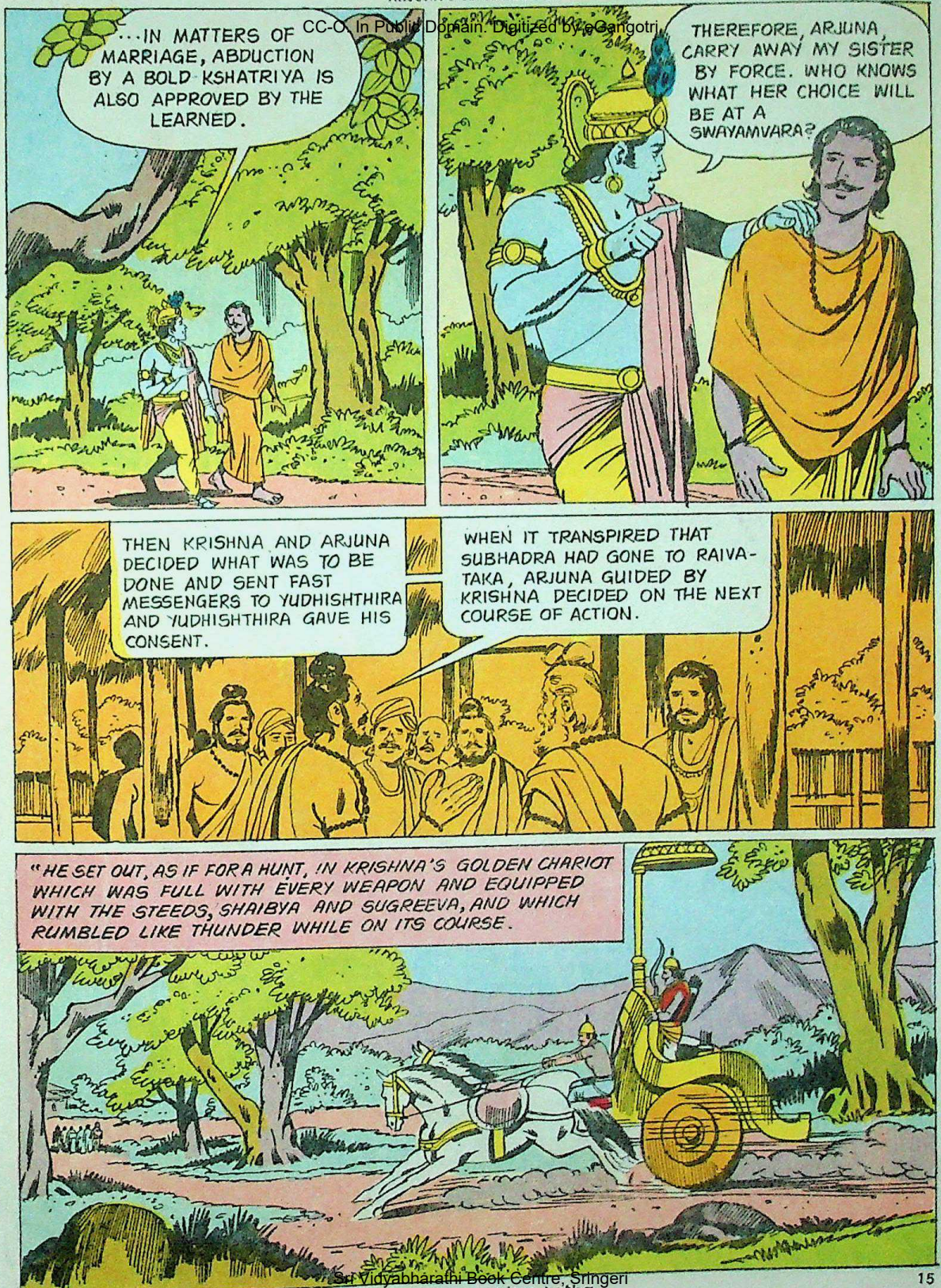

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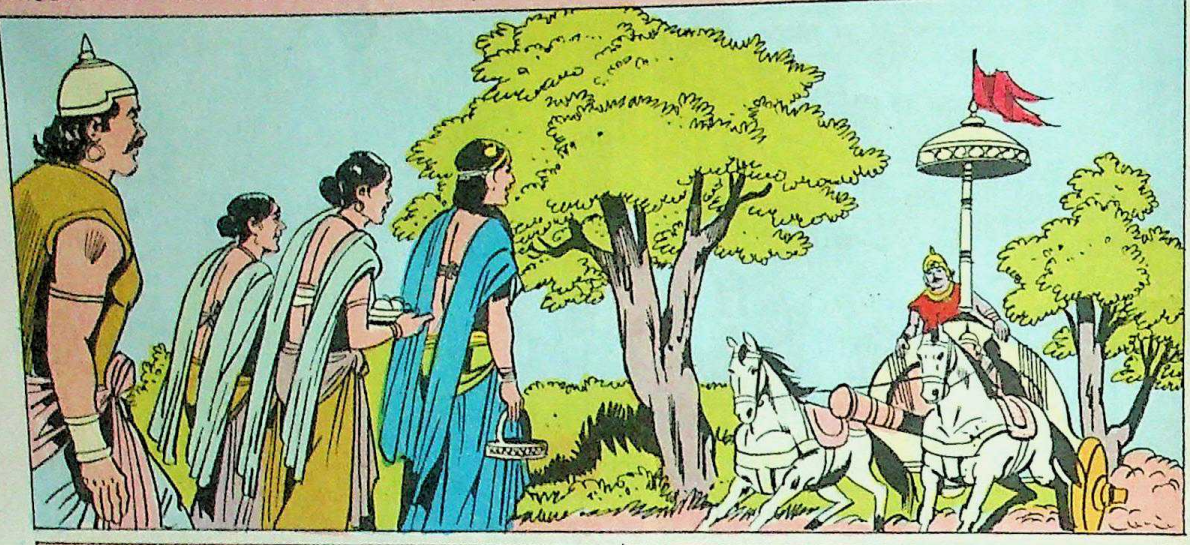
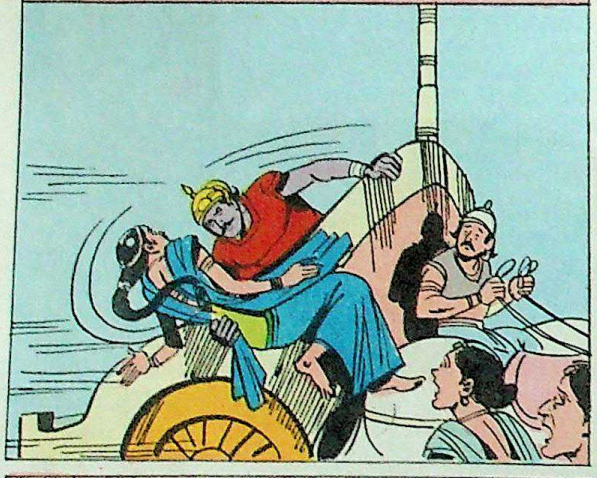
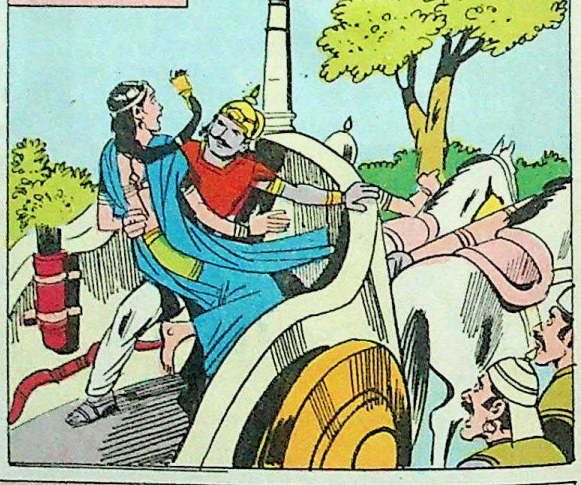
"MEANWHILE, SUBHADRA, HAVING WORSHIPPED AT RAIVATAKA MOUNTAIN AND THE DEITIES THERE, WAS RETURNING TO DWARAKA.



"ARJUNA THEN RUSHED TOWARDS THAT MAIDEN OF PERFECT FEATURES...



"...FORCIBLY CARRIED HER INTO HIS CHARIOT...



"...AND PROCEEDED TOWARDS HIS OWN CITY, INDRAPRASTHA. THE WARRIORS AS THEY SAW SUBHADRA BEING CARRIED AWAY...

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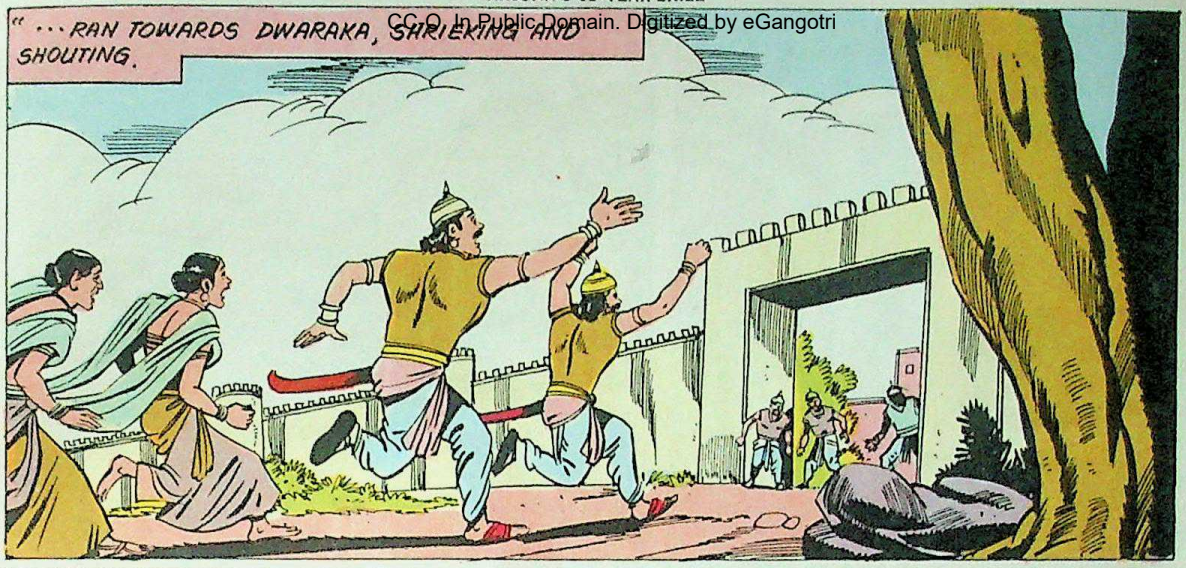

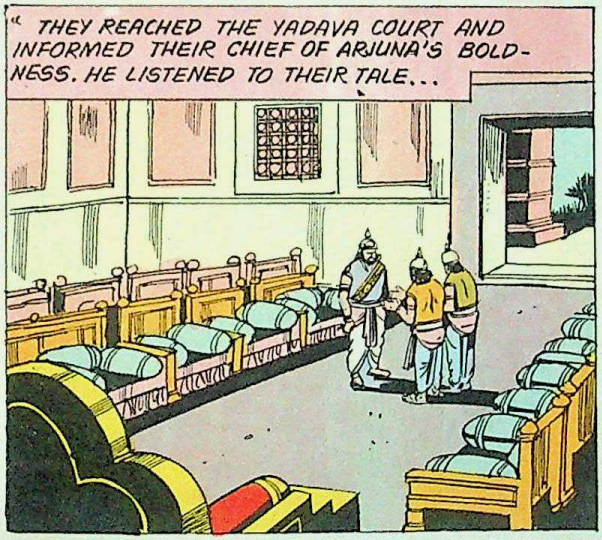

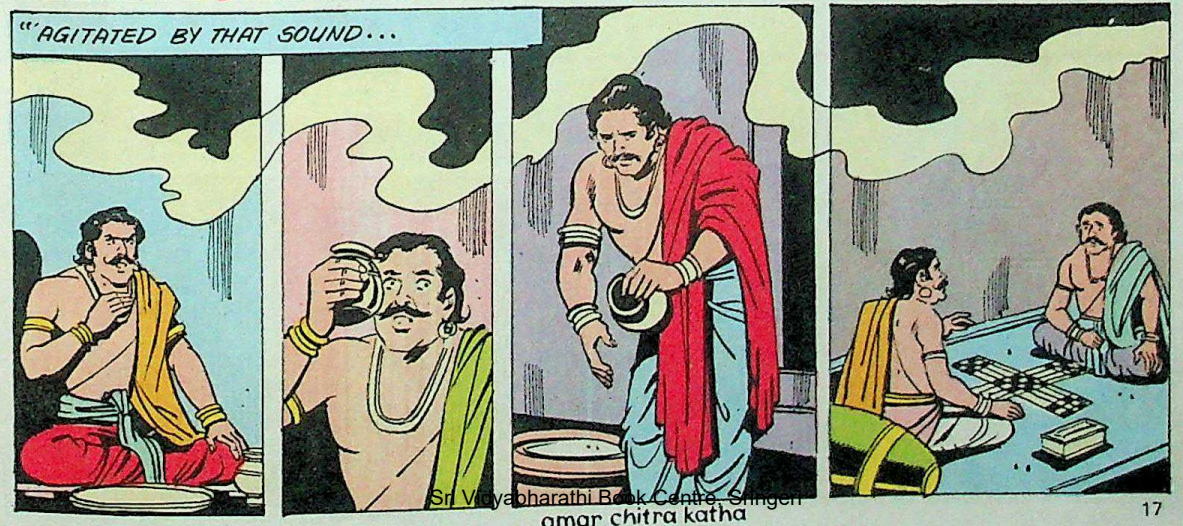

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"... THE VALIANT MEN OF THE COW LEFT THEIR MEALS HALF-EATEN, THEIR DRINKS UNFINISHED...

"... AND RUSHED IN FROM ALL SIDES.

"THOSE VALIANT MEN TOOK THEIR SEATS ON GILDED THRONES COVERED WITH RICH CARPETS AND DECKED WITH PRECIOUS GEMS.

WHEN THEY WERE SEATED, O MONARCH, THE CHIEFTAIN NARRATED THE DOINGS OF ARJUNA.

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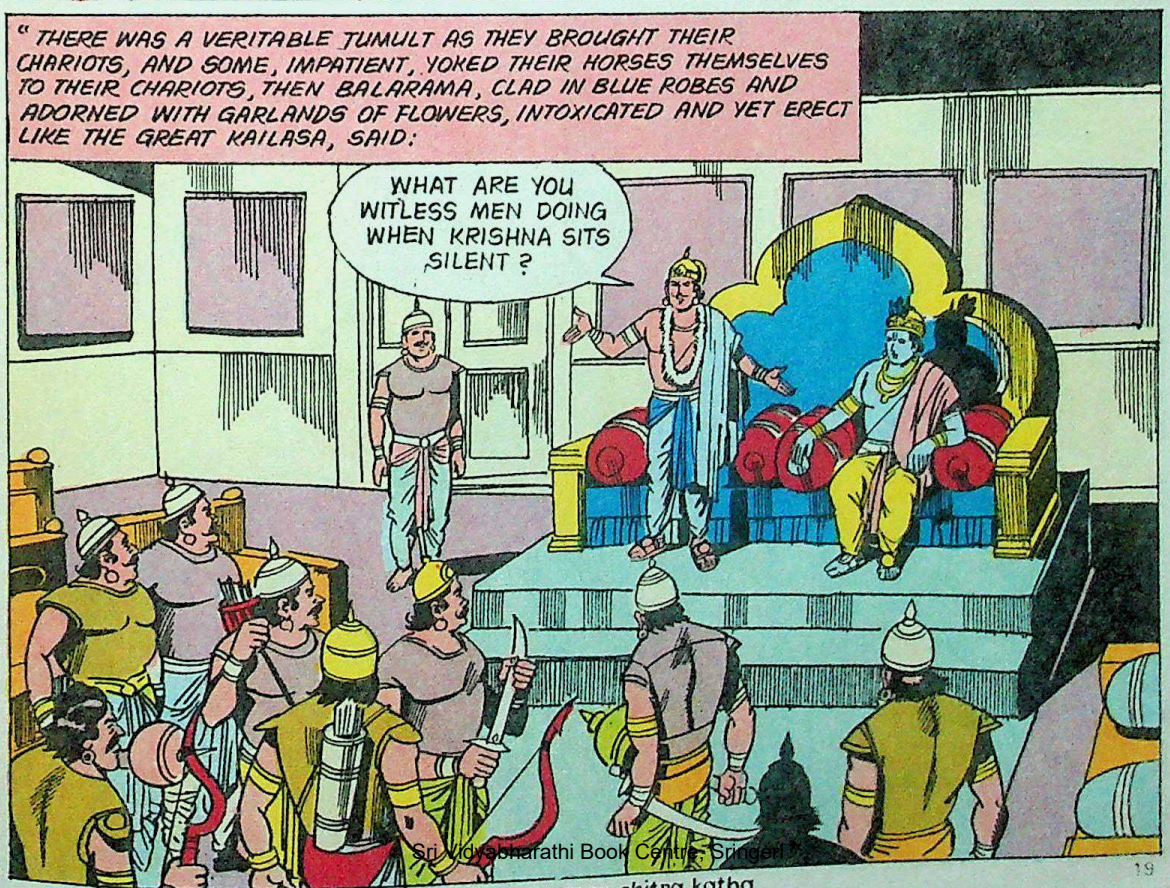

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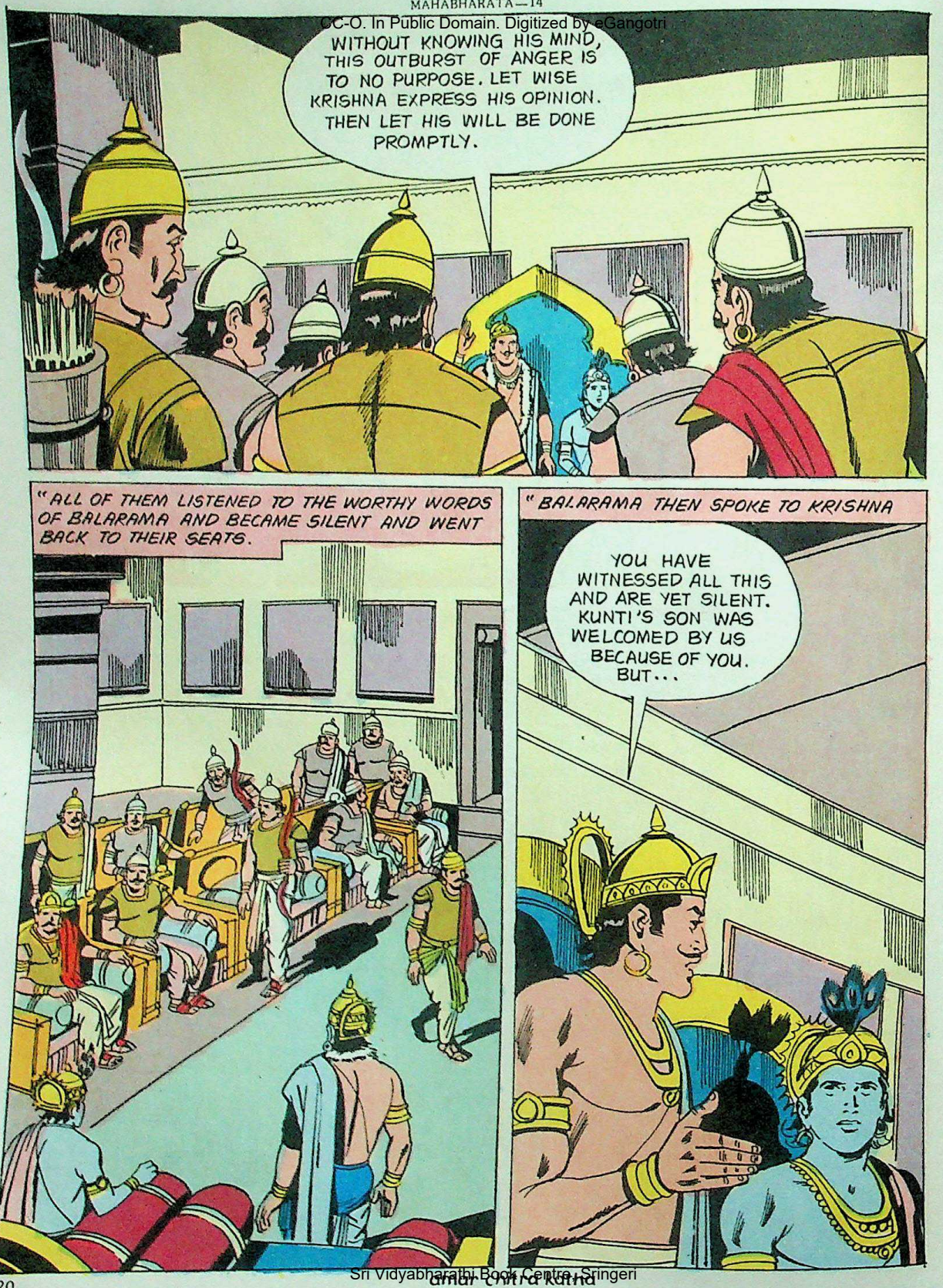

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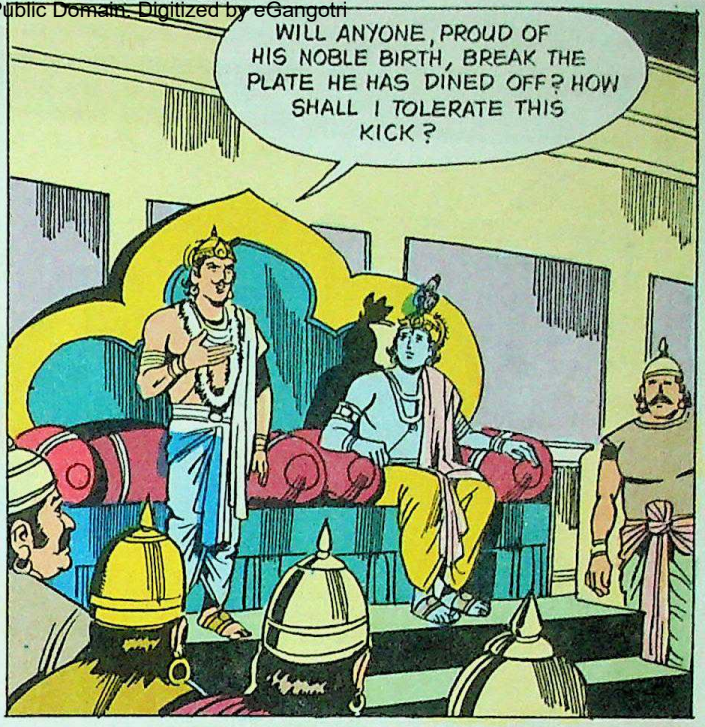

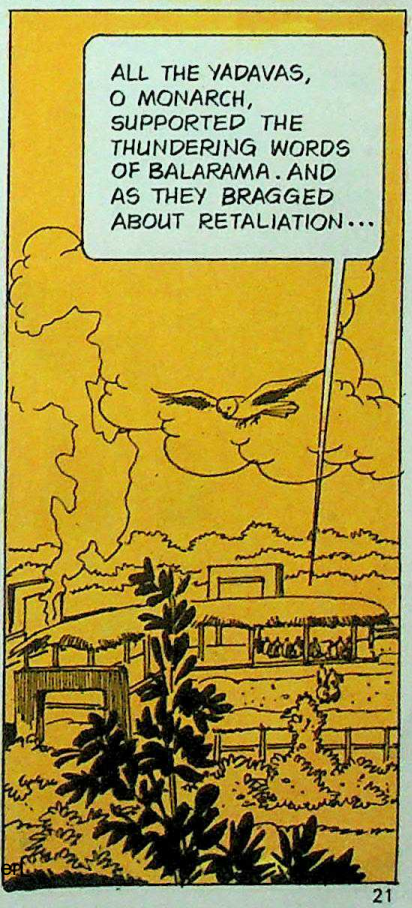

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"...KRISHNA UTTERED THESE WORDS FULL OF SENSE AND PROPRIETY.

THIS ALLIANCE IS RIGHT. SUBHADRA IS NOBLE AND SO IS ARJUNA. HIS ACTION BESPEAKS NOT SO MUCH OF INSULT AS APPRECIA TION OF OUR RACE.

WHO WOULD NOT BE HONOURED BY KINSHIP WITH THE DESCENDANT OF BHARATA, AND THE SON OF KUNTIBHOJA'S DAUGHTER?

WHICH VALIANT MAN WOULD WAIT FOR A MAIDEN TO BE DONATED LIKE AN ANIMAL? AND WHO ON EARTH WOULD SELL HIS OFFSPRING?

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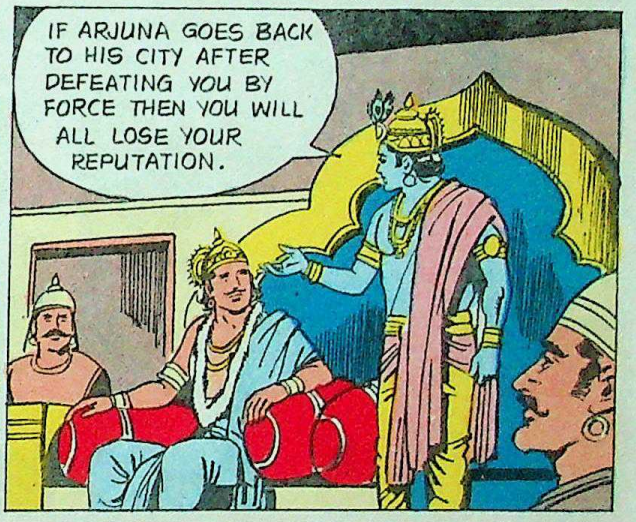

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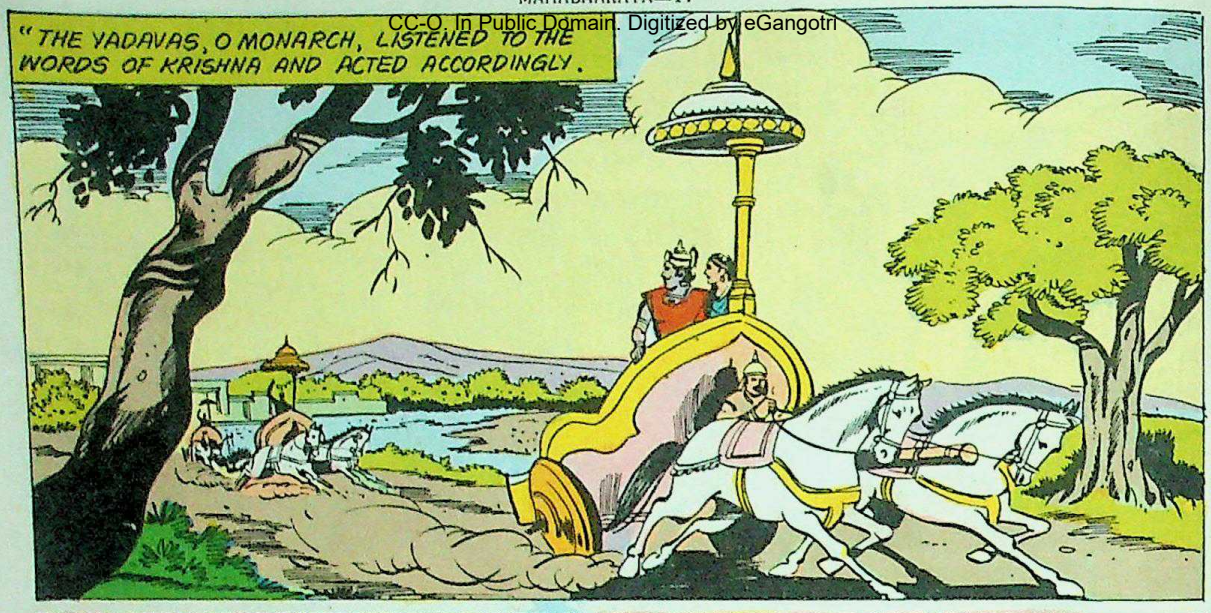

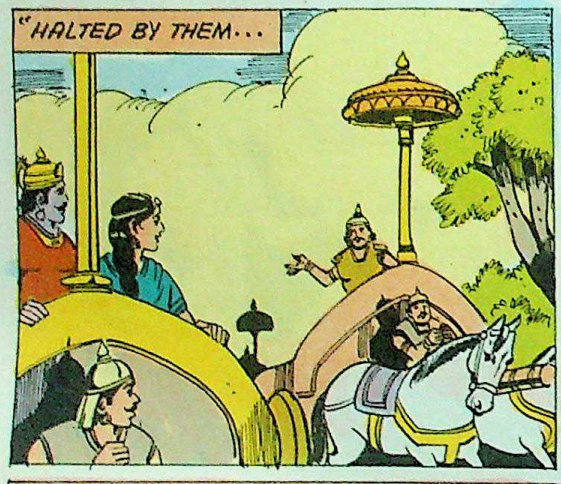

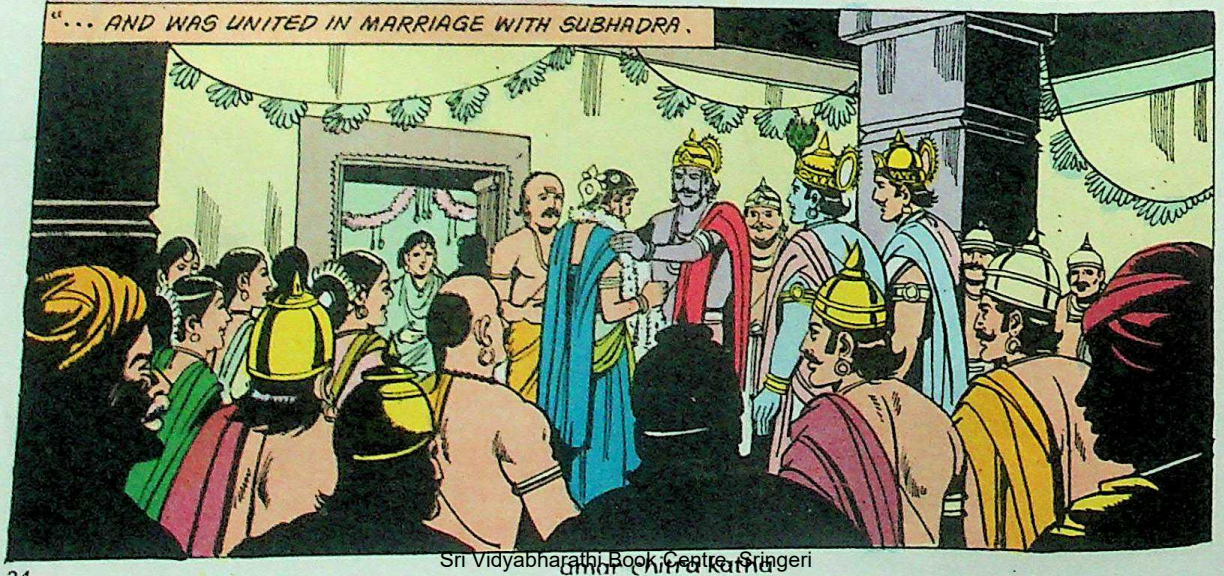

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CHERISHED BY THE YADAVAS, ARJUNA SPENT A YEAR IN DWARAKA AND THEN, IN THE LAST YEAR OF HIS EXILE, HE STAYED IN THE SACRED SPOT OF PUSHKARA*.

AND WHEN THE TWELVE YEARS WERE COMPLETED HE CAME BACK TO INDRAPRASTHA.

"HE PAID HIS RESPECTS TO THE KING FIRST AND THEN...

"...WENT TO DRAUPADI WHO IN JEALOUSY SAID TO HIM:

GO BACK TO WHERE SUBHADRA IS.

* NEAR MODERN AJMER

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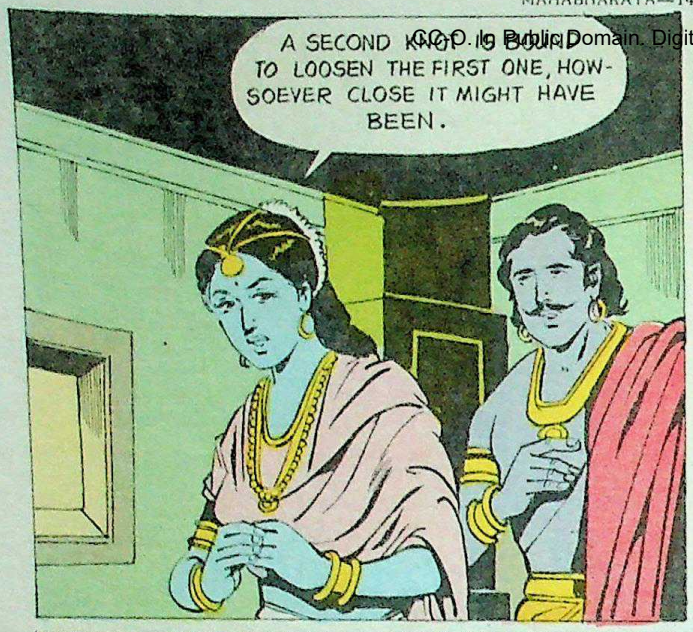

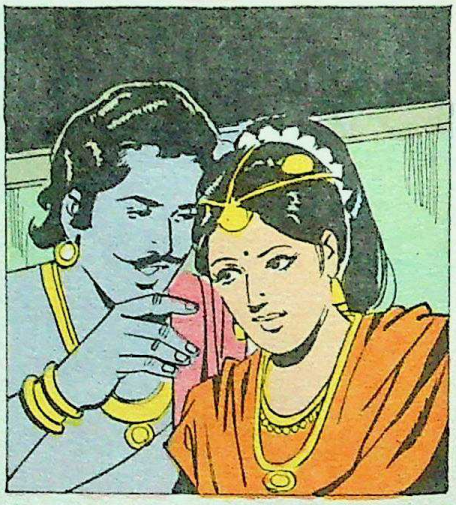

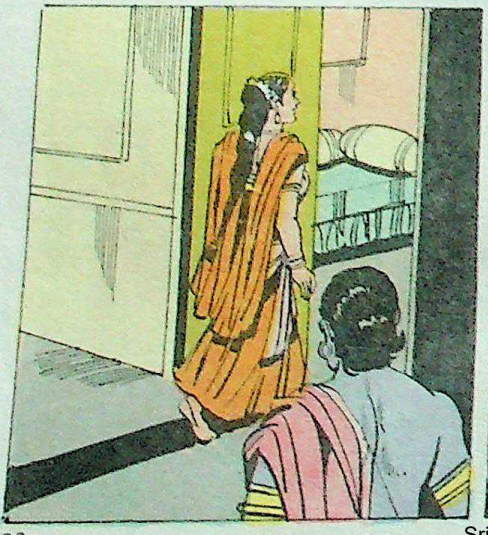

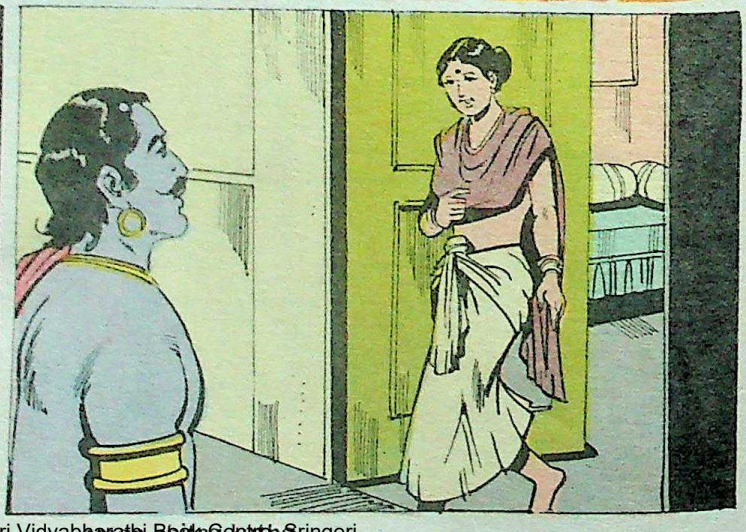

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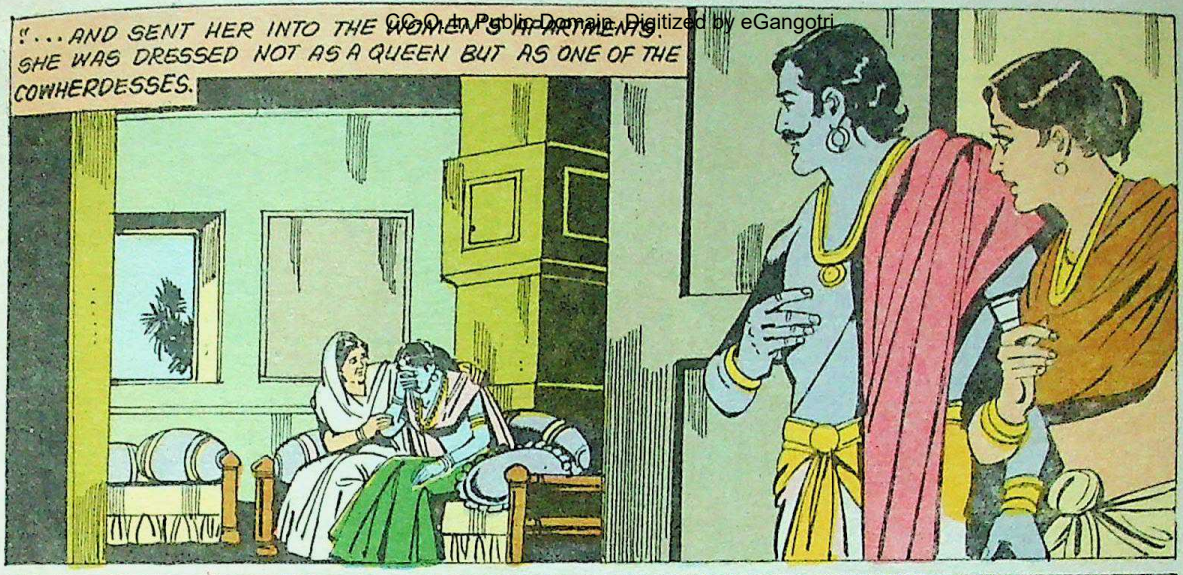

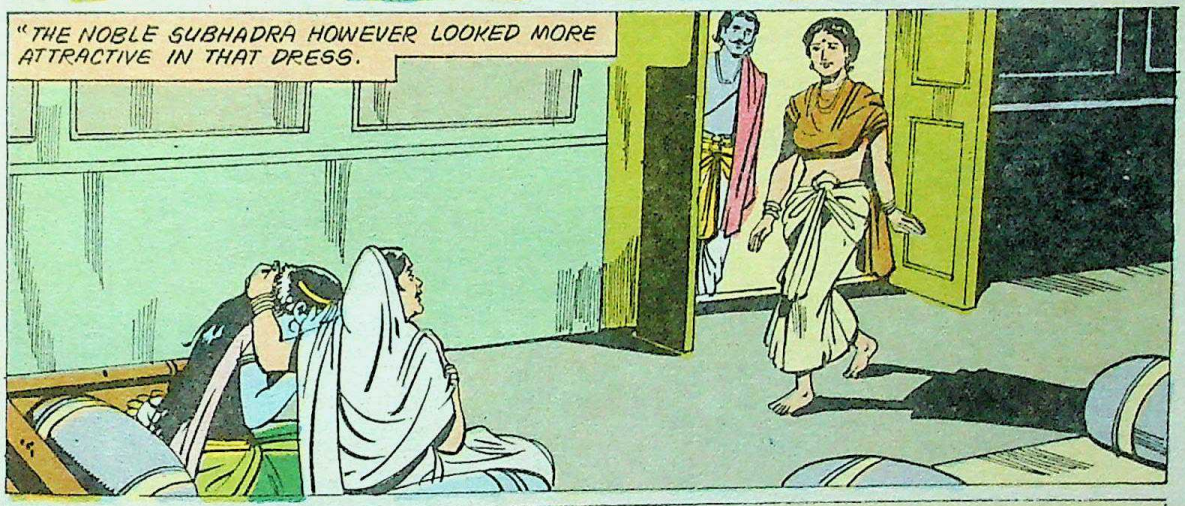

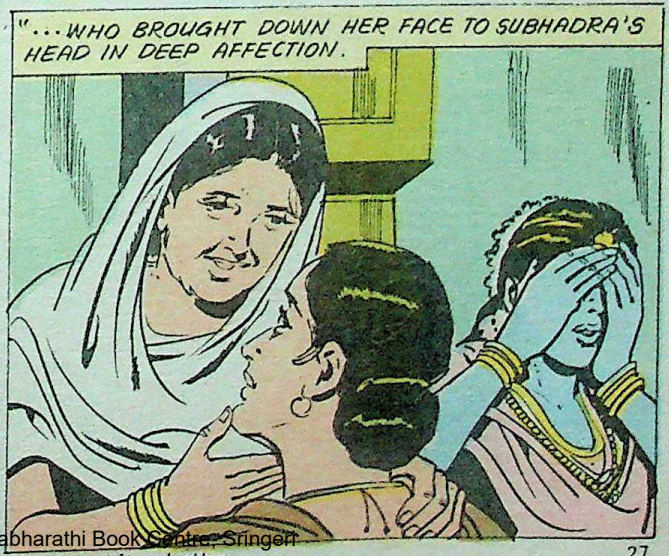

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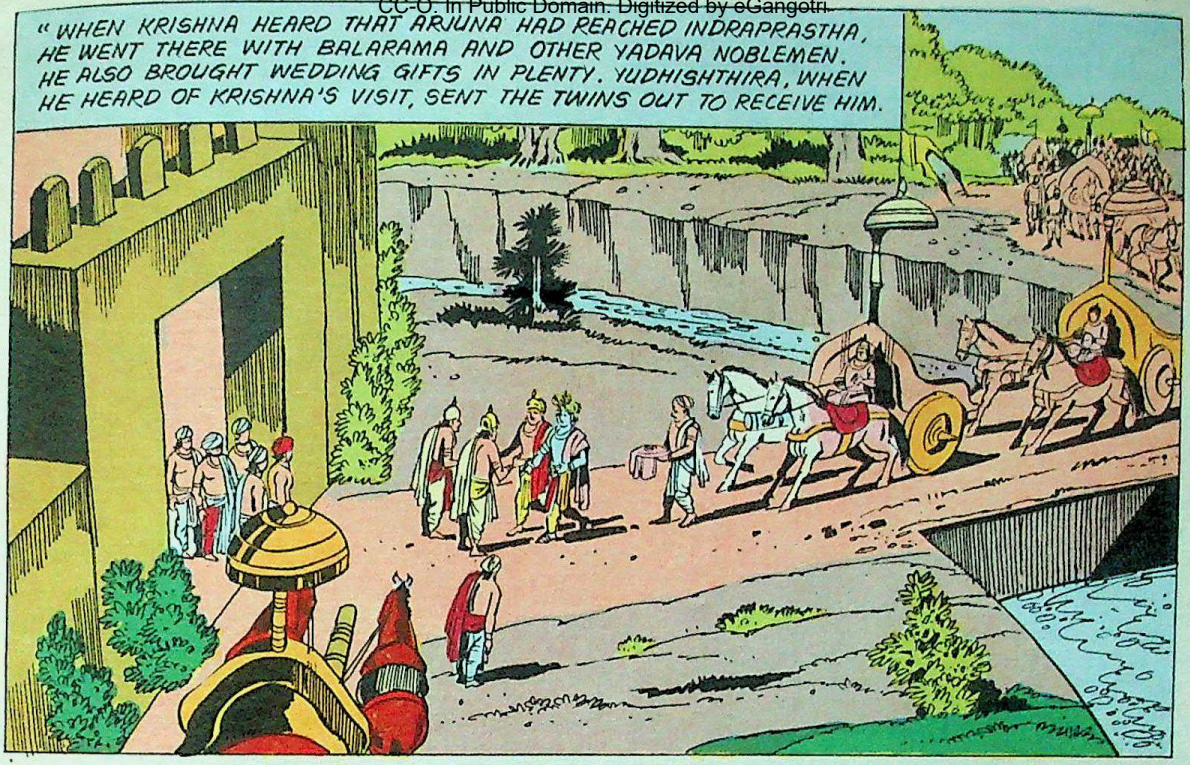

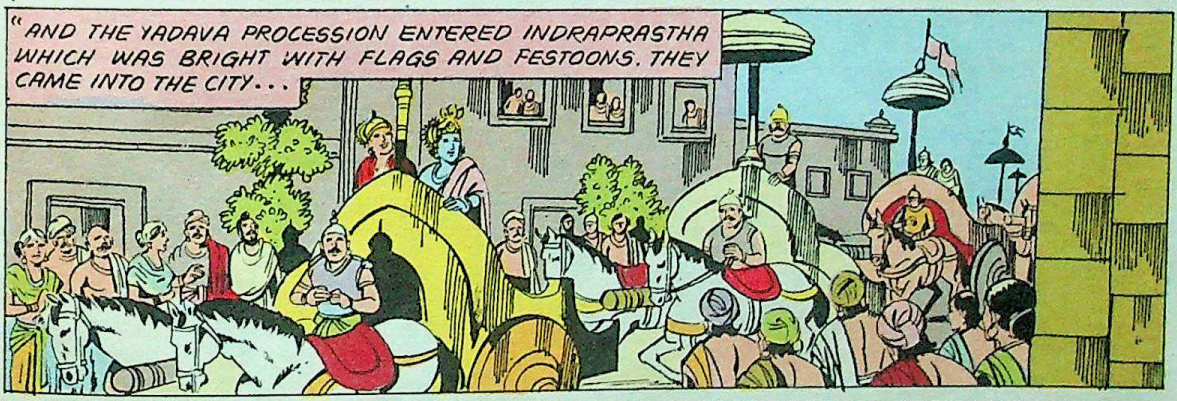

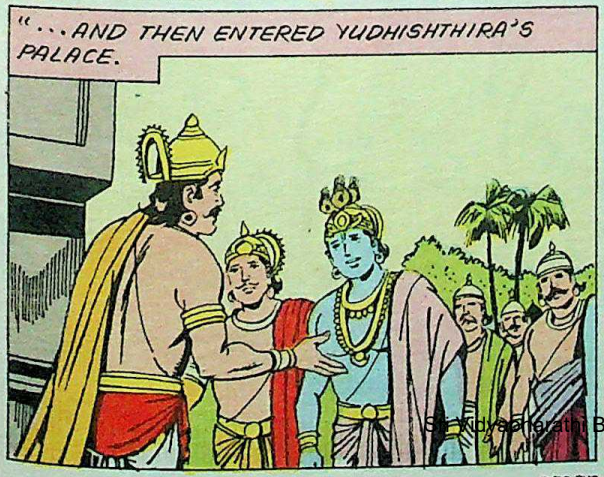

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"THE VALIANT MEN OF THE KURU AND YADAVA RACES PASSED MANY DAYS TOGETHER IN PLEASURABLE PURSUITS.

"THEN THE YADAVAS, LED BY BALARAMA, RETURNED TO THE CITY OF DWARAKA CARRYING WITH THEM THE DAZZLING, PRECIOUS JEWELS PRESENTED TO THEM BY THE GREAT KURUS.

"KRISHNA REMAINED IN INDRAPRASTHA WITH ARJUNA AND ROAMED THE BANKS OF THE YAMUNA HUNTING DEER AND WILD BOAR.

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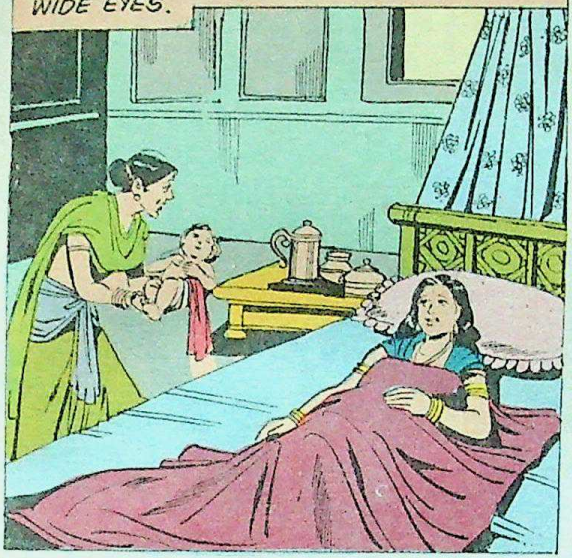
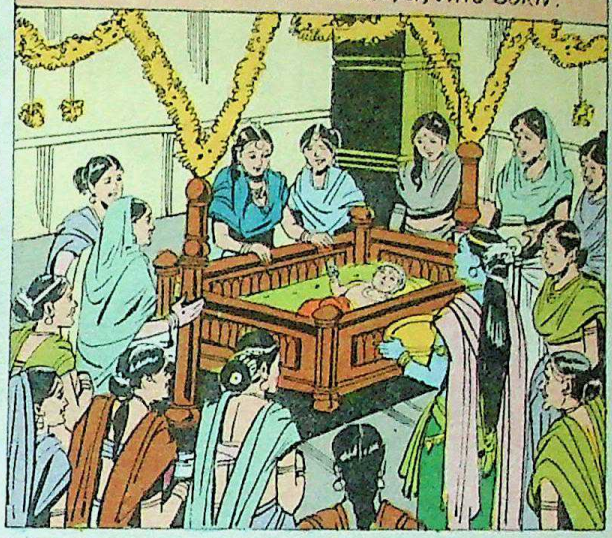
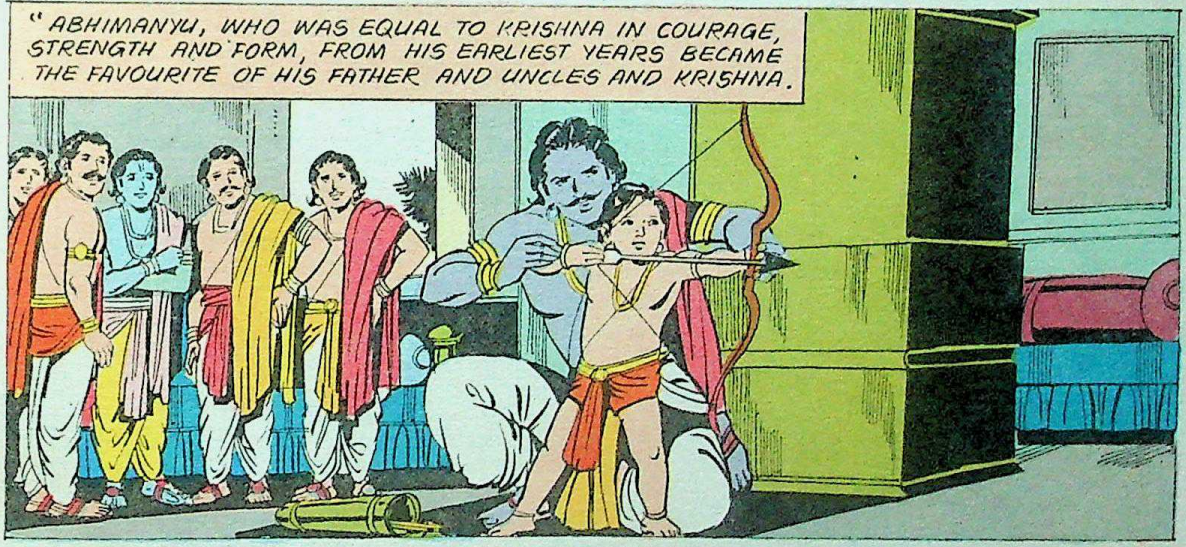
"IN DUE COURSE, SUBHADRA GAVE BIRTH TO A SON OF LONG ARMS, BROAD CHEST AND WIDE EYES.



"KRISHNA ARRANGED TO HAVE ALL THE RITUALS DONE AS SOON AS THE CHILD, WHO CAME TO BE CALLED ABHIMANYU, WAS BORN.



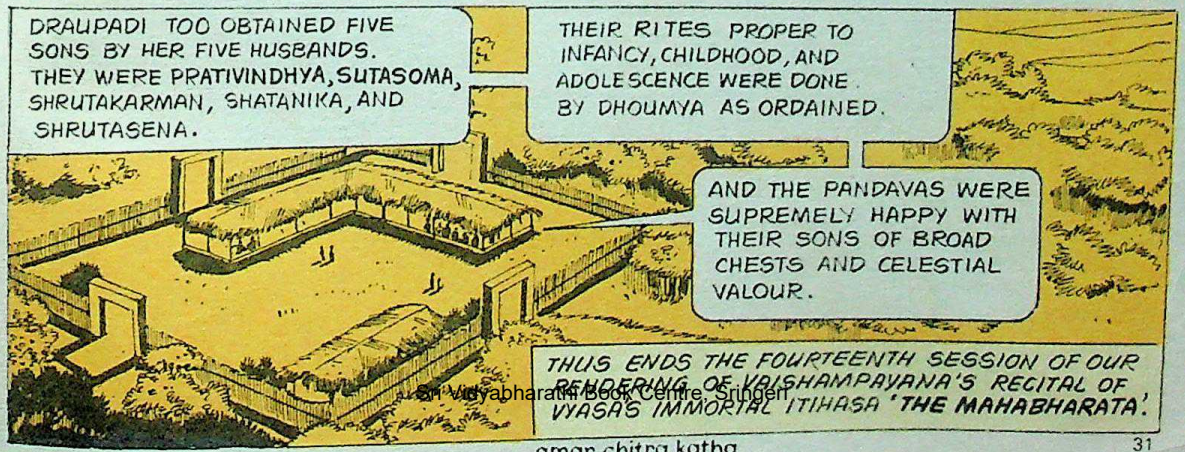
"ABHIMANYU, WHO WAS EQUAL TO KRISHNA IN COURAGE, STRENGTH AND FORM, FROM HIS EARLIEST YEARS BECAME THE FAVOURITE OF HIS FATHER AND UNCLES AND KRISHNA.



DRAUPADI TOO OBTAINED FIVE SONS BY HER FIVE HUSBANDS. THEY WERE PRATIVINDHYA, SUTASOMA, SHRUTAKARMAN, SHATANIKA, AND SHRUTASENA.

THEIR RITES PROPER TO INFANCY, CHILDHOOD, AND ADOLESCENCE WERE DONE BY DHOUMYA AS ORDAINED.

AND THE PANDAVAS WERE SUPREMELY HAPPY WITH THEIR SONS OF BROAD CHESTS AND CELESTIAL VALOUR.



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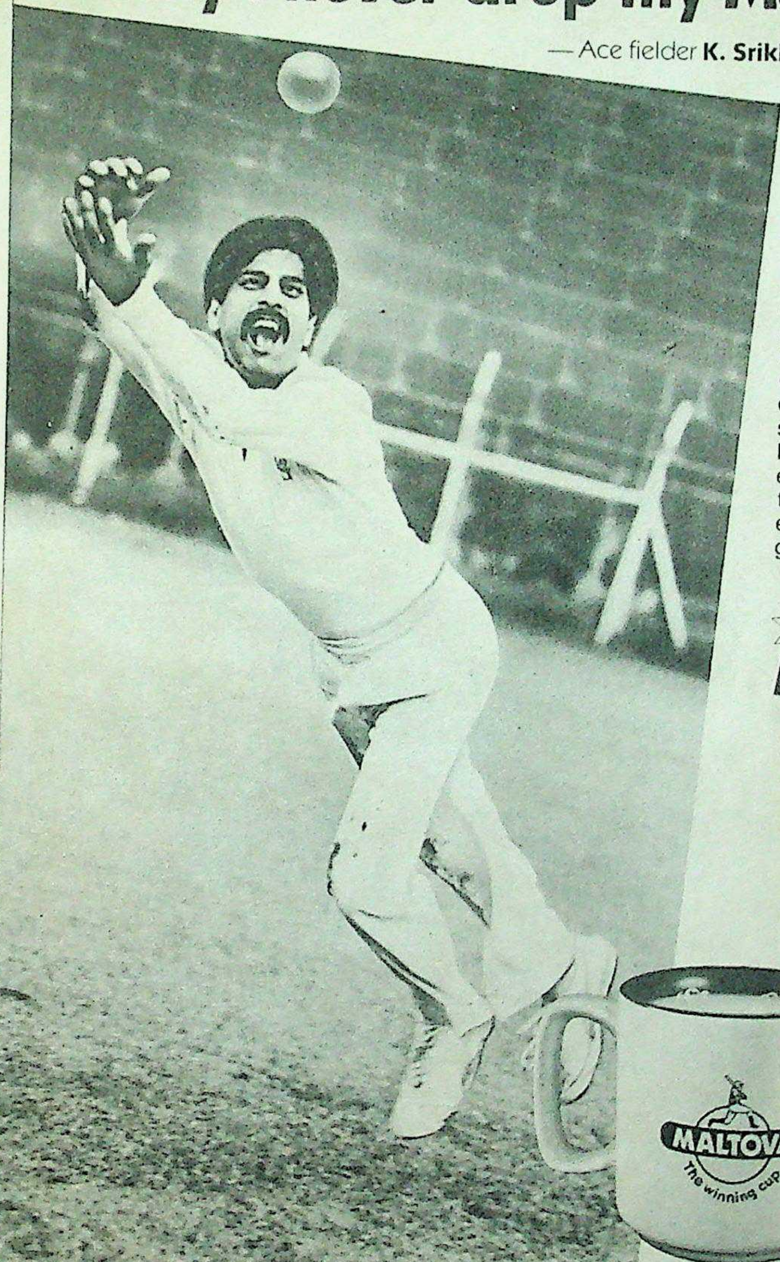

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